

# COVID-19 EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UPDATE

23 February 2023 / N° 155

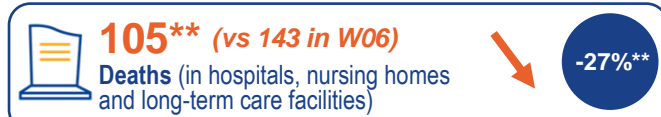
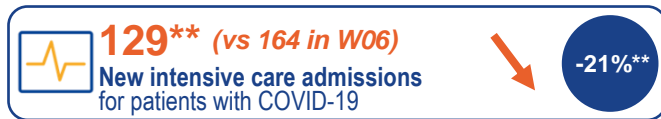
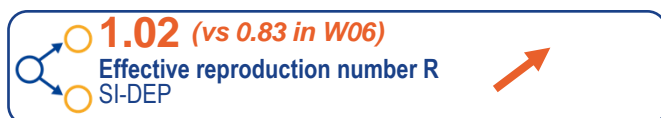
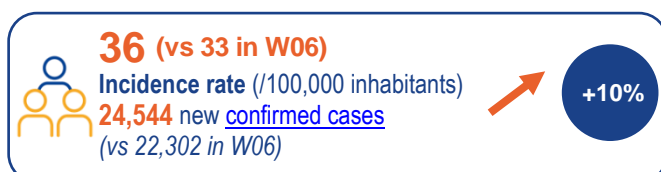
As part of its surveillance, alert, and prevention missions, Santé publique France analyses and publishes COVID-19 data obtained from its network of partners<sup>1</sup> as well as its own studies and surveys. This report is based on data submitted to Santé publique France up to 21 February 2023.

**Information: From next week, the Epidemiological Update presenting the situation of COVID-19 in France will be published every Thursday (instead of Friday at present).**

## Key numbers

In week 7 (13-19 February 2023)

Compared to week 6 (6-12 February 2023)



On 20 February 2023

Compared to 13 February 2023



## Key points

### Epidemiological situation

In week 7, virological indicators remained low but were increasing slowly. Indicators were increasing for emergency department visits. Hospital admissions and deaths continued to decrease.

- Metropolitan France:
  - Incidence and positivity rates on the rise among people aged 20 and over
  - Incidence and positivity rates rising or stable in most regions
  - Hospital admission rates falling in most regions
  - Number of deaths stable depending on the region
- Overseas France:
  - Incidence and positivity rates down or stable in most regions
  - Hospital admission rates down to a very low level

### Variants

- BA.5 in majority but continuing to decrease (64% of sequences in week 5 Flash Survey), with a stabilisation of sub-lineage BQ.1.1 (59% in week 5 Flash Survey vs 60% in week 4)
- Recombinant XBB increased to 26% (vs 14% in week 4 Flash Survey), with 20% of XBB.1.5 (vs 11%)
- All Omicron sub-lineages currently identified present similar characteristics

### Prevention

- Vaccination on 20 February 2023 (Vaccin Covid data):
  - 22.5% of 60-79 year-olds had received a booster dose for the Omicron variant (26.8% among those eligible); this proportion was 25.2% and 28.8% respectively in the 80 and over age group;
  - 27.1% of 60-79 year-olds and 17.5% of 80+ year-olds had received a dose of vaccine in the last 6 or 3 months, respectively
- Given that SARS-CoV-2 and winter viruses are still in active circulation, continued compliance with preventive measures remains recommended:
  - up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination, including a booster dose of bivalent vaccine (protecting against the original strain and the Omicron variant) for eligible individuals already vaccinated with a primary series, and flu vaccination;
  - continued application of precautionary measures, particularly in case of a positive test and/or symptoms.

\*Due to strike action by doctors in private practice on 14 February, SOS Médecins activity was disrupted and the figures should be interpreted with caution.  
\*\*W07: unconsolidated data Updated values for these indicators will feature in the next Epidemiological Update.

<sup>1</sup> Santé publique France acknowledges the large public health network that contributes to COVID-19 surveillance: healthcare professionals working in private practice and hospitals, emergency departments, hospital and private biology laboratories, learned societies for infectious diseases, resuscitation, and emergency medicine, CNAM, INSERM, and INSEE.

## Week 7 (13 to 19 February 2023)

### SITUATION UPDATE

In week 7, virological indicators remained low with a slight increase in incidence and positivity rates in adults, along with a drop in the screening rate\*. In addition, the number of emergency department visits was increasing, with healthcare visits potentially being modified during this school holiday period. Hospital admissions and deaths continued to decrease. On 20 February, only 22.5% of people aged 60-79 and 25.2% of those aged 80 and over had received a booster dose adapted to the Omicron variant. Given that several respiratory viruses are still in active circulation, reinforcing vaccination coverage for COVID-19 and the flu among eligible persons remains necessary. Compliance with protective precautions and other preventive measures remains recommended in case of symptoms or a positive test, as well as to protect vulnerable people.

A slight increase in incidence and positivity rates was again observed nationwide. These indicators continued to fall among the under 20s, but increased in the 20+ age group, with levels remaining modest. The screening rate fell among the under 20s, while it stabilised or fell slightly among those aged 20 and over. Emergency department consultations for suspected COVID-19 for all ages were up. In metropolitan France, incidence and positivity rates were up or stable in most regions. Hospital admission rates continued to fall in the majority of regions. Deaths were down or stable, depending on the region. In overseas France, incidence and positivity rates were up in Martinique to a moderate level, stable in Guadeloupe and falling in French Guiana and Reunion Island. The number of new hospital admissions was falling or stable depending on regions, at a very low level.

Since the emergence of Omicron in late 2021, significant and rapid genetic diversification has been observed within this variant and its successive sub-lineages. However, all Omicron sub-lineages currently described feature very similar characteristics, hence remaining within this variant. In metropolitan France, BA.5 (all sub-lineages combined) was still in majority but continued to decrease with 64% of interpretable sequences in the week 5 Flash Survey of 30 January 2023 (vs 74% in the week 4 Flash Survey). Among the sub-lineages of BA.5, detection of BQ.1.1 (including its sub-lineages) seems to stabilise, with 59% of interpretable sequences in the week 5 Flash Survey (vs 60% in the week 4 Flash Survey). In parallel, there was a stabilisation of BA.2 sub-lineages (11% in the week 4 Flash Survey and 9% for the week 5 Flash survey of 2023) and an increase of the recombinant XBB (from 14% in the week 4 Flash Survey to 26% in week 5 of 2023). Among the sub-lineages of the recombinant XBB, XBB.1.5 increased the most rapidly, from 11% in the week 4 Flash Survey to 20% in week 5 of 2023. More information is available in the [emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants-linked analysis of 15/02/2023](#).

The level of booster vaccination coverage continued to rise slowly. On 20 February 2023, 22.5% of 60-79 year-olds and 25.2% of those aged 80+ had received a booster dose for the Omicron variant (26.8% and 28.8% of those eligible, respectively\*\*). Moreover, 27.1% of 60-79 year-olds had received a vaccine dose within the last 6 months\*\*, and 17.5% of 80+ year-olds within the last 3 months\*\*\*. Vaccination coverage among health professionals for the complete primary vaccination series, the first booster dose and the booster adapted to the Omicron variant were estimated respectively at 95.7%, 86.3% and 13.2% for employees of nursing homes, 97.7%, 88.9% and 14.2% for those working in private practice, and 96.6%, 88.4% and 14.7% for those working in hospitals\*\*\*\*.

\*Due to possible changes in the use of screening, particularly in relation to the change in derogatory compensation for work stoppages from 1 February 2023, these indicators may be underestimated and should be interpreted with caution. \*\*Method described in Epidemiological Update N° 145. \*\*\*All COVID-19 vaccines included. \*\*\*\*Method described in Epidemiological Update N° 147.

## Graphs and tables

### [InfoCovidFrance](#)

The dashboard gives direct access to the indicators presented as graphs and tables and a complementary weekly report covering:

- [hospital indicators](#)
- [long-term care facility indicators](#)
- [virological data at national level](#)
- [virological data at regional level](#)
- [data on variants](#)
- [data on vaccination coverage](#)

### This week's survey

Update of data on [monitoring of COVID-19 cases among health professionals](#)

For more information on COVID-19, the surveillance systems in place, and vaccination, consult the websites of [Santé publique France](#) and [Vaccination Info Service](#)

For more information on the regional data, see the [Regional Epidemiological Updates](#)

Find all the open access data on [Géodes](#)